

Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

www.iowadnr.com

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July 29, 2003

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TROUT FISHIN' IN THE CITY

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Trout fishing just got easier for many Iowa anglers. Well, closer at least. Fisheries crews Wednesday released 3,400 trout in McLoud Run, in Cedar Rapids. The unique, 'in city' trout stream brings the coldwater sport to about 200,000 people in the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids area, and closer to many other anglers scattered across Iowa.

Most of the trout released, 3,000, were fingerlings, evenly divided between rainbow, brown and native brook trout. The other 400 were 10 to 14-inch mature fish; most of them browns.

Actually, there have been trout in McLoud Run for several years; stocked by the Department of Natural Resources, first as an experiment; and now through annual stocking. But when the trout come just once a year, it's cause to go home and grab your pole. "I didn't realize they only stock once a year," admitted Doug Wumkes of Mount Vernon, after hauling a 13-inch rainbow trout up the rocky, weedy bank just a few yards from Interstate 380. He had been in the nearby sporting goods store when he heard about it. He was throwing a silver spinner that had the attention of the still naïve, hatchery trout. "They're chasing it. I just had another hit. They seem interested in biting."

All the fish caught here go back into the water. With just a few hundred mature fish stocked each year, to supplement the growing fingerlings, demand would easily outstrip supply. So, it's a catch-and-release, artificial lure only stream. Anglers in northeast Iowa's Trout Country are used to catch-and-release regulations. If they want to take home a limit, they'll move to another stream.

The idea of trout fishing in the middle of the city seems a little far-fetched. However, the springs feeding McCloud Run are cool enough to keep the sensitive trout healthy and support the stream biology they need, especially in the upper end of the two-mile stretch. “We surveyed the stream and found temperatures of about 58 degrees near the springs,” recalled DNR fisheries worker Greg Hall of Iowa City. “Downstream, it got up to 65 degrees. That doesn’t seem like a lot, but trout feel the difference.”

They’ll tolerate higher temperatures, but a major concern is storm runoff from the miles of hot pavement after a summer cloudburst. Population studies show the fish do survive, though. “The brown trout tend to do well in the surveys we did,” notes fisheries technician Jon Christensen. “They are a little hardier than rainbow or brook trout. Also, there is a very good forage base of minnows and other small fish. Browns feed on them more than do the rainbows or brooks. However, we still stock all three species, to see what sort of holdover we have; and what sort of growth we see from them.”

Battery-powered monitors in the stream periodically measure water flow and temperature. A \$700,000 grant is available for watershed work; such as upstream retention basins to slow down storm runoff. Much still needs to be done, though, for the grant to materialize.

For trout anglers, the availability of trout in Cedar Rapids is not going to eliminate the minimum 1½ hour ride to northeast Iowa. There are *short* stretches where McCloud looks wild as any Clayton County stream, but the steady stream of traffic a few feet away reminds you that you’re in the middle of the city.

On the other hand, being mere minutes from streamside is comforting, when you’re stuck in the office or fighting traffic at the end of another muggy, 90-degree day. “For a short outing, this is really a great stream,” pronounced Wumkes. “It’s catch and release, but that’s just as much fun as catch and keep. Unless you really get into a big one.”

And if a few more ‘city anglers’ get bitten by the trout bug, there’s plenty of room for them up north. “It’s a great opportunity for a new crowd of prospective trout anglers,” emphasized Christensen. In any case, it’s a chance to tie into a hard fighting fish that, a few days after stocking, has become ‘stream wise’, literally yards from the concrete jungle.

Quite a switch from the shady, rocky tranquility of northeast Iowa.

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**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES EXHIBITS TO FOCUS
ON WATER QUALITY AT THE STATE FAIR**

DES MOINES - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is gearing up for the state fair and this year even more activities and events of Iowa's outdoor heritage will be on display.

The theme of the DNR building is water quality. The main attraction is an 80-foot re-created Iowa watershed. The watershed represents two typical Iowa landscapes, one depicting good watershed practices and the other showing poor. The watersheds show impacts from industry, towns and agriculture operations.

"Our focus on water quality will hopefully draw attention to how each of us can have an impact – good or bad – on our lakes and streams," said Kevin Baskins, chief of the DNR's communications bureau. "It's our intention to open the eyes of fairgoers and to make a positive impact on our valuable water resource."

Baskins said other displays include an old, leaky outboard boat motor and how it impacts mussels and fur-bearing animals. There will be a restored wetland and buffer strips showing how those simple land practices can benefit water quality and provide valuable wildlife habitat.

A 55-foot replica of the keelboat Lewis and Clark made famous during the expedition to find the Pacific Northwest will be featured in the Heritage Village. The red and white replica pirogues, used to haul supplies during the exploration, will also be featured. The boats are part of a permanent exhibit at Lewis and Clark State Park that will be showcased as part of the re-created expedition across the country, which passes along the western boarder of Iowa next year.

DNR staff from the wildlife bureau will be working a Color Infrared Photography booth from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day. Fairgoers can receive a free printout of their property or favorite hunting spot during that time.

The DNR will be having daily programs at the outdoor amphitheater on a number of topics including Iowa snakes, willow furniture making, tree treks around the fairgrounds, tree climbing, bats, big mammals of Iowa, tree pruning and lots of cooking. Daily program schedules will be announced on a message board at the front of the building. Activities for kids include coloring tables, building sandcastles and Velcro fishing and other water recreation.

Fairgoers can learn tips to save energy and reduce waste in the home while touring a converted semi-trailer along the north side of the courtyard.

As always, the aquariums will be filled with fish commonly found in Iowa waters. Fisheries staff will hold fishing cleaning and cooking demonstrations at 1 p.m. on Aug. 11 and 14 in the Maytag Family Center Sponsored by Blue Bunny Homemakers Theater, just east of the DNR building.

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GRANT FOR MARINAS TO BENEFIT LARGER BOATS

DES MOINES - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is accepting grant proposals for the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program. The DNR expects to receive \$100,000 in BIG grant funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The DNR is making this announcement with the belief that this program will be re-authorized in 2004 by the U.S. Congress. The purpose of the program is to improve boating access, strengthen community ties to the water and promote awareness of transient boating opportunities.

Facilities to accommodate transient boats, boats 26-feet or longer, are often insufficient. Transient boaters are unable to enjoy many of the recreational, cultural, historic, scenic and natural resources opportunities associated with waters that they boat on. Marinas along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers are the most likely recipients for the program money, said Martin Konrad, BIG Coordinator for the DNR.

“These rivers lack the marinas or commercial tie-up facilities along extended stretches that benefit transient boats,” he said. “Basic facilities such as tie-ups, fueling docks, utilities and restrooms are mostly non-existent.”

Marina owners and operators interested in the program should contact Martin Konrad at 515-281-6976. Interest parties are to submit grant proposals, for consideration, to the DNR by Sept. 1.

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IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of July 29, 2003

www.iowadnr.com

For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

Southwest

Green Valley (Union): Largemouth bass are still being caught with crankbaits along shore. Channel catfish fishing is good using liver, night crawlers or cut baits.

Fogle Lake (Ringgold): Channel catfish can be caught using suspended night crawlers or liver off the steep points.

Three Mile (Union): Walleyes are good using leeches, night crawlers or crankbaits on roadbed and main points. Anglers drifting some of the flats are also doing well. Channel catfish are still being caught on night crawlers or cut bait off the rocks

and around the fish cleaning station. Largemouth bass fishing is good throughout the lake. Bluegills are on the outside of the weed-lines or on the tops of the fish mounds.

Twelve Mile (Union): Channel catfish fishing is still good on cut bait and liver. Walleye fishing is good using leaches on the points. Anglers are catching a lot of yellow bass.

Little River (Decatur): Channel catfish is best using cut bait and liver in the bays. Some crappies can be caught drift fishing open water.

Walnut Creek Marsh (Ringgold): Big bluegills can be caught by drift fishing the channel along the south shore.

Icaria (Adams): One to 4-pound channel catfish are still being caught everywhere in the lake using cut bait and liver.

Viking (Montgomery): Crappie fishing is fair using tube jigs tipped with a minnow or minnows suspended from a bobber around brush piles, or suspended in 8 to 10-feet of water. Catfish fishing has been good on liver. Bluegills are fair with jigs and night crawlers.

Cold Springs (Cass): Catfish are being caught on liver and prepared baits, especially toward evening.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Channel catfish are excellent using liver or prepared baits.

Greenfield (Adair): Fishing is fair for 8-inch bluegills using jigs and/or night crawlers along shore and around brush piles. Fishing is good to excellent for channel catfish in the early morning and evening hours using liver.

Orient (Adair): Channel catfish are good using prepared stink bait or cut fish. Largemouth bass fishing is fair.

Nodaway (Adair): Bluegills are biting on jigs/night crawlers along the shore and around structure. Fishing is good to excellent for channel catfish in the early morning and evening hours using liver.

Morman Trail (Adair): Channel catfish are good in the early morning and evening hours using liver. Largemouth bass fishing is fair.

Prairie Rose (Shelby): Fishing is good for 8-inch crappies on jigs/minnows around brush piles. Channel catfish are good on liver or prepared baits. Largemouth bass fishing is good.

Willow (Harrison): Largemouth bass fishing is good using a variety of baits. The bass are generally under legal length limit. Anglers are catching 1.5 pound channel catfish on liver, night crawlers and prepared baits.

Desoto Bend (Harrison): Anglers are catching channel catfish using liver and prepared baits.

Farm Ponds (SW Iowa): Largemouth bass and channel catfish fishing is good. Anglers are reminded that permission needs to be granted to fish on private farm ponds.

Big Creek Lake (Polk): Bluegill fishing has been good with the best success in water 8 to 10-feet deep using pieces of worm on a 1/32-ounce jigs and slip bobbers. Channel catfish fishing has been good using cut and stink baits. Some nice-sized fish have been reported. Largemouth bass and walleye fishing has been good, although most fish are below the legal length limits, 18 inches and 15 inches, respectively.

Beaver Lake (Dallas): Bluegill fishing is fair, with the best areas around the woody structure along the shorelines.

Don Williams (Boone): Channel catfish fishing is fair using night crawlers in the north end of the lake. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair using top-water lures around shoreline structure. Crappie fishing is fair using jigs/minnow combinations.

Lake Ahquabi (Warren): Bluegill fishing has been good using night crawlers or wax worms. Largemouth bass – primarily sub-legal – are being caught on crankbaits. Channel catfish fishing has been good on night crawlers, stink baits and chicken liver.

Hooper Lake (Warren): Bluegills have been caught using traditional baits and lures. Largemouth bass fishing is fair using crankbaits, although as in Lake Ahquabi, most fish are sub-legal.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Crappie fishing has been fair for boat anglers in deeper water using jigs and minnows. Channel catfish fishing has been good using night crawlers.

Easter Lake (Polk): Channel catfish fishing is good with the majority of fish caught using stink baits. Crappie fishing has slowed, with some fish caught using jigs and minnows and/or worms.

Hickory Grove Lake (Story): Channel catfish fishing is good on chicken liver. Bluegill fishing is fair using small hooks tipped with worms. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair with most anglers using top-water lures.

Saylorville Lake (Polk): White bass/wipers are being caught either trolling or vertical jigging, along with an occasional walleye. Channel catfish fishing has picked up using traditional baits such as stink baits, cut baits and night crawlers. **Tailwater:** White bass fishing has been fair using lead heads and twister tails, although fishing for all species has been slowed due to the high release of water from Saylorville Lake. Channel catfish have been caught using traditional baits.

Lake Red Rock (Marion): White bass/wiper fishing has been good using rattler type lures. Channel catfish fishing has been good along shorelines using stink baits, cut baits and night crawlers. A few anglers have been very successful crappie fishing in the larger coves. **Tailwater:** White bass/wipers fishing has been excellent. Channel catfish fishing has also been good using traditional baits. Crappie fishing is good using jigs and/or minnows.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Southeast

Lake Darling (Washington): Catfish are still hungry in the late afternoon and evenings. Fish along the creek channel and off the ends of the jetties for the best action.

Lake Odessa (Louisa): Water levels are down for the rest of the summer to get the vegetation ready for the fall waterfowl migration.

Lake Geode (Henry): The rebuilding of the silt retention ponds has finally started. They are working on the one down by the main boat ramp early this week so it may be closed off and one for a while.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Walleyes have been hitting on night crawlers drifted or trolled. Channel catfish have been biting on liver and night crawlers.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Largemouth bass have been hitting on crankbaits and spinners. Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Crappies have been biting on small jigs. Channel catfish have been biting on night crawlers.

Lake Keomah (Mahaska): Channel catfish have been biting on night crawlers and liver. Largemouth bass have been hitting on artificial presentations.

Coralville Reservoir (Johnson): Anglers continue to catch a few catfish throughout the reservoir on shad and dip baits.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): A few catfish continue to bite near the causeway and throughout the lake on dip baits and night crawlers. Crappie fishing has been slow to fair on jigs and minnows.

Lake Iowa (Iowa): Catfish fishing has been good on assorted baits. A few bluegills have been caught on worms and jigs. Largemouth bass fishing has also been good.

Diamond Lake (Poweshiek): Channel catfish has been excellent on various baits throughout the lake. Bluegill fishing has been fair. Anglers are reminded that minnow use is prohibited at Diamond Lake.

Pleasant Creek (Linn): White bass fishing has been good on surface baits. Largemouth bass have been hitting on night crawlers and soft plastic baits.

Skunk River (Washington and Henry): Water levels are getting close to where they should be this time of year. Hopefully when the level stabilizes the fishing will improve.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: Fishing continues to be good in the Mississippi River as water levels continue a slow drop and clarity is good. Water temperature is 79 degrees. The river at Bellevue is near normal for late July. Channel catfish, freshwater drum, walleye, bluegill, largemouth and smallmouth bass are all being caught in good numbers. Catfishing in **Pools 9-15** has been good. Stink bait is the preferred method, but many are being caught on worms as well. Good catfish locations are Minnesota Slough, Big Slough and Winneshiek Slough in Pool 9; Harpers Slough, McDonald Slough and State Line Slough in Pool 10; and Cassville Slough, Picayune Chute, Jack Oak Slough, and Hurricane Chute in Pool 11. In Pools 12-14, try the running sloughs for channel catfish. Freshwater drum (sheepshead) are being caught in excellent numbers in most areas with current. Drum can be caught using a sliding egg sinker and a hook baited with worms or crayfish. If you plan to clean drum, store the freshly caught fish on ice until you fillet them. This will keep the meat firm. In addition, cut the red meat away from the rest of the fillet. If you take these two simple steps, drum are excellent eating. Try fishing the wing dams and main channel for freshwater drum in **Pools 9-14**. Bluegills are being caught in nearly every habitat on the river; however, the larger fish seem to be in current areas. Try fishing a night crawler and split shot around rock piles with a gentle easy sweep of current. Cast the night crawler upstream of the rock pile and let the current sweep the bait past the rocks in **Pools 9-11**. Bluegill and crappies are also biting in **Pool 13** on wax worms and minnows. Walleye fishing has been good on the wing dams in **Pools 9-11**, but slow in **Pools 12-14**. To catch walleyes in the Mississippi, it is best to fish upstream of the wing dams using leeches or night crawlers. A three-way swivel with

a short lead to the sinker and a long lead to a hook seems to work best. Keep your rig on the front section of the wing dam to avoid letting it float over the top of the wing dam where it can snag easily. Largemouth bass fishing has been excellent in **Pools 9-11** and good in **Pools 12-14**. These fish are being caught on a variety of lures, but the traditional tube jigs, buzz baits, crank baits and spinner baits are working well. Lures that can be fished through heavy vegetation, such as scum frogs, are also good producers. Big Slough and DeSoto Bay have been good in **Pool 9**. In **Pool 10**, McGregor, Norwegian and Methodist lakes have been excellent and Cassville Slough and Bertom lakes in **Pool 11** are good. Smallmouth bass are also being caught in very good numbers in **Pools 9-11**. Smallmouth are found in swift current areas with rock. These areas are generally associated with the main channel habitats, including bank stabilization rock, day markers or wing dam habitats. Spinners and crankbaits are the lure of choice for these feisty fish, but crankbaits seem to catch the larger fish.

Upper Iowa (Howard, Winneshiek and Allamakee) and **Turkey rivers** (Howard, Winneshiek and Fayette): Smallmouth bass fishing is good to excellent on jigs and tube jigs.

Upper Iowa River (Winneshiek): Smallmouth bass fishing is good on crankbaits or jigs.

Cedar River (Floyd and Mitchell): Channel catfishing is good to excellent and are biting on cut baits and prepared stink bait. Smallmouth bass and walleye fishing is slowing and fishing for northern pike has been steady.

Cedar (Bremer and Black Hawk) and **West Fork Cedar rivers** (Butler): Channel catfish are excellent on stink baits, dead chubs, night crawlers, crayfish and chicken liver—just about anything! Anglers having the best success are fishing in shallow riffle areas. A few smallmouth bass and walleye are also starting to bite as the river clears.

Shell Rock River (Butler): Anglers are catching walleyes and smallmouth bass on jigs tipped with a night crawler or leech. Channel catfish are excellent on a variety of baits.

Wapsipinicon River (Buchanan): Channel catfish are good on chicken liver and night crawlers. A few walleyes are being caught on jigs tipped with a night crawler.

Maquoketa River (Delaware): Channel catfish are good on prepared baits or night crawlers and walleye fishing is fair. Smallmouth bass fishing in the catch-and-release area below the Delhi Dam is improving with the drop in water levels.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Bluegill and crappies are biting on a piece of night crawler or wax worm suspended 3 feet below a bobber and fished along the weed edges. Largemouth bass are hitting top-water lures. Channel catfishing is good to excellent.

Lake Meyer (Winneshiek): Bluegill, largemouth bass and crappie fishing is slowing.

Trout fishing and stream conditions are excellent! For current trout stocking information, contact the Big Spring Hatchery at 563-245-1699, Decorah Hatchery at 563-382-3315 or Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-5736. You can also view the trout stocking calendar on-line by going to www.iowadnr.com, clicking on **Fish and Fishing** and then choosing **Favorite Pages**.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Walleye activity is good this week using leeches on a night crawler harness, and crankbaits. Walleyes can be caught right along with the yellow perch. Yellow perch fishing is good using wax worms or wigglers in 18 to 22 feet of water on ice fishing type lures. Find the weed lines and the schools. Movement may be necessary to find schools of fish. Smallmouth bass are being caught on the rock piles throughout the lake. Largemouth bass are being caught on top-water lures and plastic worms in areas of thick vegetation.

West Okoboji (Dickinson): Anglers are catching bluegills using a leech under a bobber in 15 to 20 feet of water in Echo Bay and Hayward's Bay. Some smallmouth bass are being caught on leeches in Echo Bay and Hayward's Bay. Walleyes are being caught along the weed lines on a leech under a bobber or on crankbaits, and on leeches in Echo Bay and Hayward's Bay.

East Okoboji (Dickinson): Channel catfish are being caught at the north end using stink bait or crawdads. Some bullheads are being caught at the north end using traditional baits. White bass are being caught on small white spinners. Anglers are catching nice numbers of legal sized walleyes. Trolling spinners and night crawlers off the weed lines if there is a good chop on the water. Troll crankbaits for bottom hugging fish.

Lake Pahoja (Lyon): Channel catfish continues to be good. Fish around the brush piles with chicken liver. Crappie and bluegill fishing is good throughout using a small piece of night crawler or wax worm. The fish are on the small side.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Yellow bass are being caught around the rock reefs, drifting the north shore and off some of the public docks. Use minnows and cut bait for the best action. Try different spots until you locate fish. Channel catfish are good using chicken liver, stink bait and chubs. The rush beds in the west end, rock reefs and wind blown shorelines are the best spots.

Black Hawk Lake (Sac): Channel catfish are fair to good on a variety of baits.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Channel catfish are good on a variety of baits. Anglers trolling shad raps are catching a few walleyes. White bass fishing is excellent around docks and the shoreline using twisters.

Yellow Smoke (Crawford): Bluegill fishing is fair to good using small jigs and wax worms.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

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